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Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly the report of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies on their seventeenth meeting, held at Geneva on 23 and 24 June 2005, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/202 of 18 December 2002.

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Report of the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies on their seventeenth meeting

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/202, requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly the reports of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies on their periodic meetings. The present document contains the report of the seventeenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies.

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I. Introduction

1. The seventeenth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies, convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/178, was held at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva on 23 and 24 June 2005. The meeting was immediately preceded by the fourth inter-committee meeting, held from 20 to 22 June 2005.

II. Organization of the meeting

2. The following chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies attended: Virginia Bonoan-Dandan, Chairperson of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR); Christine Chanet, Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee (HRC); Jakob E. Doek, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC); Prasad Kariyawasam, Chairperson of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW); Fernando Mariño Menéndez, Chairperson of the Committee against Torture (CAT); Rosario Manalo, Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and Mario Jorge Yutzis, Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

3. Mr. Mariño Menéndez was affirmed as Chairperson-Rapporteur of the meeting, and Mr. Doek was affirmed as Vice-Chairperson, in accordance with the convention that the Chairperson of the inter-committee meeting acts as Chairperson of the meeting of chairpersons. The chairpersons adopted the provisional agenda (HRI/MC/2005/1 and Corr.1) and the proposed programme of work.

III. Cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

4. On 24 June 2005, the chairpersons met with the Expanded Bureau of the sixty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights and with the representative of the Chairperson of the fifty-sixth session of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro. Ambassador Makarim Wibisono, Chairperson of the sixty-first session of the Commission, introduced the members of the Expanded Bureau attending the meeting (Ambassador Mohamed Saleck Ould Mohamed Lemine, Ambassador Volodymyr Vassylenko, Deirdre Kent, Ambassador Hyuck Choi, Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanian, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba). Other members sent representatives.

5. The Chairperson welcomed the opportunity to exchange views with the treaty bodies and stated that monitoring of the implementation of human rights treaties by independent experts provided the Commission and other human rights mechanisms with key inputs, and allowed for the sharing of best practices among States. He noted that the chairpersons had been invited to address the sixty-first session of the Commission under agenda item 18, "Effective functioning of human rights mechanisms", although only one had been able to participate. The main achievements of the session included the informal discussions held specifically to

discuss the proposals for reform of the United Nations human rights framework in the Secretary-General's report, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005 and Add.1-3). Informal consultations had been held on 20 June 2005 to reflect further on the recommendations relating to human rights contained in the report, with a view to contributing to the deliberations on the proposed reform of the United Nations at the General Assembly.

6. Mr. Pinheiro described the outcome of the fifty-sixth session of the Sub-Commission, drawing attention to the appointment of new special rapporteurs and subjects for investigation. He stressed the importance of continuing the dialogue between the treaty bodies and the Sub-Commission on topics of mutual concern, such as reservations to human rights treaties and universal implementation of international human rights treaties.

7. The chairpersons and the members of the Expanded Bureau exchanged views on ways in which dialogue between the treaty bodies and the Commission could be strengthened. Several chairpersons indicated that they understood the time constraints faced by the Commission, but made suggestions on ways and means of enhancing the dialogue between the chairpersons and the Commission.

8. Reform of the United Nations, and that of the human rights mechanisms, including the treaty bodies, was also discussed, inter alia, the proposals for a unified treaty body system, a peer review system and a global report on human rights. The implications of the reform proposals on different mechanisms, including the Commission, the Sub-Commission, the Commission on the Status of Women and the treaty bodies, were also mentioned.

IV. Seventh joint meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders

9. On 23 June, the chairpersons held their seventh joint meeting with the mandate holders of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. The meeting was co-chaired by Philip Alston (Chairperson of the meeting of special rapporteurs/representatives, experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights) and Mr. Mariño Menéndez.

10. The Secretariat provided recent information on the question of human rights and human security. It was noted that, at its sixty-first session, the Commission had established a new special procedure concerning human rights and counter-terrorism which would undertake the traditional functions of special procedures such as country visits, but also bring concerns to the attention of United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, and make regular reports to the General Assembly or the Commission when necessary. The mandate holder would also coordinate with other special procedures on issues relating to counter-terrorism.

11. It was noted that the United Nations system had continued discussing linkages between human security and human rights, most notably within the context of United Nations reform, which highlighted security, development and human rights as the three pillars of the Organization. It was suggested that the discussion within the United Nations on human security and counter-terrorism should be more strongly linked to human rights, particularly in the context of the Counter-Terrorism

Committee. It was also suggested that wider economic and social issues should be taken into account in the discussion.

12. Participants welcomed the initiatives to enhance respect for human rights in counter-terrorism efforts, and stressed that a broad understanding of human security and respect for human rights must form the basis of a successful counter-terrorism strategy. They were concerned that a range of human rights could be violated by certain anti-terrorism measures and several noted that the absence of a definition of terrorism facilitated the use of anti-terrorism measures that violated human rights.

13. The participants discussed initiatives to reform the United Nations human rights framework, including the proposal for a standing unified treaty body, but stressed that the proposal would need in-depth discussion. Several participants underscored that the expertise developed by the treaty bodies must not be lost in any harmonization process. Several raised legal issues that might be relevant with respect to the proposals, and concerns that a unified body might not be able to address the specificities of the treaties, and called for broad consultations on the proposal with members of treaty bodies, special procedures mandate holders, States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others.

14. The chairpersons reported on the progress made in drafting guidelines for an expanded core document, which would facilitate reporting by allowing States parties to report on the implementation of human rights norms that are common to the various treaties in one document. They highlighted the challenge of streamlining the reporting process without neglecting the specificities of each treaty.

V. Informal consultations with States parties

15. The chairpersons held informal consultations with States on 23 June. Seventy-eight States participated in this meeting. States welcomed the opportunity to engage in consultations with the chairpersons and reiterated their support for the work of the treaty bodies.

16. States supported the efforts under way to streamline the various reporting requirements of the treaty bodies. Many States considered the draft harmonized guidelines proposed in document HRI/MC/2005/3 to be an excellent contribution to reinforcing the monitoring mechanisms, and all agreed that any changes in the reporting requirements should not increase the burden on them. Several States objected to specific aspects of the proposals insofar as they might oblige States to report on matters not directly required in accordance with the provisions of the treaties, whereas others welcomed the suggestion that States should decide how to organize the information presented in their reports using the proposed common core document and treaty-specific documents. The request for extensive, disaggregated statistical data was a matter of concern to one State. Some States agreed that the preparation of an expanded core document would encourage a consistent and holistic approach to the implementation of human rights by States parties and urged the treaty bodies to use the core document to improve coordination. Many States spoke of the need to shorten the amount of time between the submission of reports and their consideration by the committees. The timetable for submission of reports was mentioned by many.

17. Three States took the opportunity to inform the chairpersons that they had begun to prepare their reports in accordance with the draft harmonized guidelines and expected to finalize their common core documents and certain treaty-specific documents in the coming year. In that context, the improved possibilities for the inclusion in reports of information gathered within a federal structure and for clearer comparison between reporting States by the treaty bodies, as well as the particular advantages of a coordinated approach to reporting for developing countries were highlighted. The need for technical assistance to support developing States meeting their reporting obligations was also mentioned by some States, which suggested that more funds should be made available to OHCHR for that purpose.

18. The Secretary-General's proposals for reform within the United Nations system, in particular the proposed creation of a Human Rights Council, were mentioned by most States, and many had questions about the relationship between the proposed peer review system and Council and the work of the treaty bodies, which should be distinct, but complementary, mechanisms. Most States welcomed the High Commissioner's Plan of Action (A/59/2005/Add.3), and many considered the proposal to explore modalities for a single standing treaty body was positive, even if the legal and political difficulties were considerable. An inclusive process of consultation, which took account of the views of treaty body members, was essential in preparing for the intergovernmental conference in 2006 which the High Commissioner had proposed.

19. One State spoke in favour of transferring responsibility for servicing the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from New York to OHCHR in Geneva so that it could be fully integrated with the other treaty bodies, as proposed by the High Commissioner in her Plan of Action.

20. States supported further harmonization and coordination of the working methods of the treaty bodies, which would help to make the system more comprehensible and accessible, and some noted that that gradual process would make it possible to identify the avenues to be explored when the proposal for a permanent unified treaty body was considered. The reports prepared by the Secretariat on working methods (HRI/MC/2005/4) and implementation of the recommendations of the third inter-committee meeting and sixteenth meeting of chairpersons (HRI/MC/2005/2 and Corr.1), as well as the proposals for harmonization of treaty body terminology, were welcomed. Many States spoke in favour of the lists of issues and questions which all committees now adopted, and which States found helpful in preparing for the examination of their reports. Further measures to encourage effective implementation of treaty body recommendations were urged, and the need for more effective technical cooperation programmes benefiting from the presence of United Nations country teams, in the light of the High Commissioner's Plan of Action was highlighted. More effective use of United Nations special procedures was also suggested and the need for transparency in the way information submitted by NGOs was received and used by treaty bodies stressed.

VI. Cooperation with the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights

21. On 24 June 2005, the chairpersons met with Vitit Muntarbhorn, member of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights. He explained that the Fund provided advice on both programming and implementation of the activities of OHCHR, and that the assistance could be used to implement substantive obligations at the national level. He referred to the recommendations of the 2003 global review of the OHCHR technical cooperation programme,[1] which suggested better coordination of the work carried out by OHCHR (i.e. technical cooperation, treaty bodies and special procedures). It was important to consider the issue of technical cooperation in the context of the United Nations reform proposals, including the High Commissioner's Plan of Action. The proposal for further country engagement and country strategies was linked to issues such as capacity-building and technical cooperation.

22. Suggestions in treaty bodies' concluding observations sometimes called for States to seek technical assistance when implementing their treaty obligations, and it was emphasized that the impact of such recommendati should be assessed, including whether treaty body recommendations on tecn.ical assistance were actually followed by a request for such assistance.

23. Mr. Muntarbhorn and the chairpersons underlined the importance of creating opportunities for treaty body members to interact with United Nations field presences, as that would assist treaty bodies to formulate targeted and country-specific recommendations in a way that was understood by donors and would allow field presences to encourage their implementation. Mr. Muntarbhorn suggested the organization of a seminar on concluding observations to discuss the format and substance of concluding observations and their implementation at the national level, and that representatives of field presences be invited to attend.

24. Mr. Muntarbhorn noted that the Fund primarily provided assistance to Governments, but its scope could be broadened to include civil society. The chairpersons highlighted the need for monitoring at the national level and the need for technical assistance for States with respect to the collection of disaggregated data. In order to enhance cooperation and dynamic dialogue, special procedures mandate holders could attend treaty body sessions, and treaty body members could observe sessions of other treaty bodies. The chairpersons encouraged the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund to continue discussions on ways to deepen their cooperation.

VII. Decisions and recommendations

25. The seventeenth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies adopted the following decisions and recommendations.

[1] "From development of human rights to managing human rights development: global review of the OHCHR technical cooperation programme", September 2003, available at http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/coop/

Adoption of the points of agreement of the inter-committee meeting

a. **The seventeenth meeting of chairpersons endorsed the points of agreement concluded at the fourth inter-committee meeting held from 20 to 22 June 2005 (annex, section IX). The chairpersons called upon the human rights treaty bodies to follow up on those recommendations and to report on their implementation at the fifth inter-committee meeting in 2006.**

Suggestions for the agenda of the fifth inter-committee meeting

b. **The chairpersons suggested that United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and non-governmental organizations be invited to submit their views on the proposals for reform of the treaty body system to the Secretariat, which would compile them in a report for discussion under the appropriate agenda items of the fifth inter-committee meeting.**

Consultation on proposals for reform of the United Nations human rights framework

c. **The seventeenth meeting of chairpersons took note of the Secretary-General's proposals for reform of the United Nations human rights system contained in his report, "In larger freedom", and the proposals contained in the Plan of Action of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for reform of the treaty body system. The meeting requested the Secretariat to organize, in an appropriate forum, consultations between the treaty bodies, States parties, OHCHR, United Nations entities and other stakeholders to discuss the proposals, including those relating to a unified standing treaty body.**

Interaction with the Commission on Human Rights

d. **The seventeenth meeting of chairpersons reaffirmed its recommendation that the Commission on Human Rights should set aside appropriate time for an interactive dialogue with the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies, who may be alternatively represented, where necessary, by their vice-chairpersons, during its annual session. It further recommended that, in addition to time for formal statements by the chairpersons, the interactive dialogue should include sufficient time for the chairpersons to engage in a true dialogue with members of the Commission on matters of common concern.**

Technical cooperation and follow-up to concluding observations

e. **The seventeenth meeting of chairpersons requested the Secretariat to organize a seminar for treaty body members, members of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for technical cooperation, United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes and, if possible, representatives of United Nations field presences to discuss the format and substance of concluding observations and their implementation at the national level.**

Cooperation with special procedures

f. **The seventeenth meeting of chairpersons reaffirmed the recommendation of the third inter-committee meeting (see A/59/264, annex) that funds be made available to support the interaction of special procedures mandate holders with treaty bodies, including through attendance at treaty body sessions.**

Statistical information related to human rights

g. **The seventeenth meeting of chairpersons takes note of the work initiated by the Secretariat to provide assistance to the treaty bodies in analysing statistical information relating to human rights presented in the States parties' reports. The chairpersons requested the Secretariat to pursue this work and prepare a background paper for the next inter-committee meeting on the possible uses of indicators.**

Meeting with special procedures mandate holders

h. **The seventeenth meeting of chairpersons suggested that the major theme for discussion at the meeting with special procedures mandate holders should be the proposals of OHCHR for reform of the United Nations human rights system, including the treaty bodies.**

Annex

Report of the fourth inter-committee meeting of human rights treaty bodies

(Geneva, 20-22 June 2005)

I. Introduction

1. The fourth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies was held at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva from 20 to 22 June 2005. The meeting was held pursuant to the recommendation of the fifteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, which called for the meeting to be convened annually (A/58/350, para. 50).

2. The following members of human rights treaty bodies attended: Human Rights Committee (HRC): Rafael Rivas Posada, Sir Nigel Rodley; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR): Virginia Bonoan-Dandan (Chairperson), Yuri Kolosov, Eibe Riedel; Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC): Jakob Egbert Doek (Chairperson); Kamel Filali, Nevena Vučković-Šahović; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Rosario Manalo (Chairperson), Meriem Belmihoub-Zerdani, Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD): Mario Jorge Yutzis (Chairperson), Fatima-Binta Victoire Dah, Morten Kjaerum; Committee against Torture (CAT): Fernando Mariño Menéndez (Chairperson), Felice Gaer, Ole Vedel Rasmussen; Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW): Prasad Kariyawasam (Chairperson), Ana Elisabeth Cubias-Medina, Abdelhamid El Jamri.

II. Opening of the meeting and election of officers

3. The meeting was opened by Prasad Kariyawasam, chairperson of the third inter-committee meeting and sixteenth meeting of chairpersons who welcomed all members, as well as the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women and representatives of the Uganda Human Rights Commission and the National Commission for Human Rights of Mexico. Mr. Kariyawasam stressed the mutually reinforcing nature of the treaties and reminded the participants that all treaty bodies were engaged in the same task of monitoring implementation of often widely overlapping instruments, and that unnecessary variation of procedure served to obscure their close links. Reference was made to the Secretary-General's second reform report, "Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387 and Corr.1), which recommended that the treaty bodies craft a more coordinated approach to their activities and standardize their various reporting requirements and suggested that each State be allowed to produce a single report on its adherence to the full range of human rights treaties to which it was a party.

4. Mr. Kariyawasam introduced the report on implementation of the recommendations adopted at the third inter-committee meeting and sixteenth meeting of chairpersons (HRI/MC/2005/2 and Corr.1), and highlighted a number of developments, including the preparation of lists of issues and questions, the

follow-up procedures of several treaty bodies, and the work initiated by OHCHR to analyse and identify the suitability of commonly used indicators in assessing the compliance of States parties with international human rights treaties. He also referred to several workshops on implementation, reporting and follow-up to concluding observations/comments which had taken place.

5. Mr. Mariño Menéndez was elected Chairperson-Rapporteur. Mr. Doek was elected Vice-Chairperson. At the opening meeting, the participants adopted the provisional agenda (HRI/ICM/2005/1 and Corr.1) and programme of work.

III. Strengthening the human rights treaty body system: harmonization of working methods and follow-up to the recommendations of the third inter-committee meeting and sixteenth meeting of chairpersons

6. Representatives of each committee introduced the developments within their respective committees to follow up on the recommendations of the third inter-committee meeting and sixteenth meeting of chairpersons.

7. Members of CESCR referred to a meeting with States parties in May 2005 which discussed the proposed optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee's methods of work. The CESCR had recently introduced a formal procedure to follow up on implementation of concluding observations/comments, appointed focal points to liaise with a number of United Nations specialized agencies, and the Committee had held regular meetings with expert groups from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). National human rights institutions had also made important contributions in the reporting process.

8. CRC members explained that they had considered introducing a procedure to follow up concluding observations but had decided that it was not yet appropriate owing to the Committee's heavy workload and the backlog of States parties' reports awaiting review. A subregional workshop on follow-up to concluding observations of the Committee had been held in Bangkok in November 2004, and similar workshops would be held in Latin America in 2005. The Committee had recently adopted new guidelines for periodic reports, which were significantly shorter and more focused than the earlier guidelines and emphasized the need for follow-up to the Committee's previous recommendations.

9. Developments in CERD included the appointment of a five-member working group to consider situations under its early warning and urgent action procedures. In August 2004, the Committee had appointed a coordinator on requests for further information and implemented a decision by which it would identify priority issues in its concluding observations, on which States would report within one year. A joint workshop on follow-up to the concluding observations/comments of CERD and CEDAW would be convened in Cairo in 2005. At its last session, a national human rights institution had been given the floor in plenary during the consideration of a State party report.

10. Members of HRC informed the meeting that the Committee had concentrated on the recommendations of earlier meetings relating to working methods and reporting guidelines and most of the recommendations of the third inter-committee meeting and sixteenth meeting of chairpersons had already been implemented.

11. Although CAT had not specifically discussed the recommendations of the third inter-committee meeting and the sixteenth meeting of chairpersons, the Committee had implemented most of the recommendations regarding working methods, lists of issues, participation of NGOs and the follow-up procedure. The Committee had also adopted new guidelines on the form and content of initial reports.

12. Since the third inter-committee meeting, CEDAW had discussed, inter alia, the introduction of country task forces and focused concluding observations with a limited number of concerns and recommendations. The Committee regretted the lack of action by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the Committee's request for extended meeting time, as that would have facilitated the fulfilment of the Committee's responsibilities under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol. Representatives expressed interest in establishing cooperation with national human rights institutions, indicating that the Committee would take up this issue at its thirty-third session in July 2005.

13. CMW had taken note of the recommendations of the third inter-committee meeting and sixteenth meeting of chairpersons, and emphasized the importance of cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights.

Reservations

14. Participants emphasized the need to have a coordinated approach to reservations to treaties, noting the work being undertaken on this subject by the International Law Commission. The report on the practice of the treaty bodies with respect to reservations (HRI/MC/2005/5) prepared by the Secretariat for the fourth inter-committee meeting was welcomed, and it was suggested that it should be kept up to date and that a working group, made up of one member of each committee, be established to consider this report, prepare a working paper and report to the fifth inter-committee meeting.

Harmonization of terminology

15. In accordance with a recommendation of the third inter-committee meeting, OHCHR had prepared a proposal for harmonization of terminology (HRI/MC/2005/2, annex). It was agreed that this should be discussed by each committee and, taking into account their comments, considered at the fifth inter-committee meeting.

General comments

16. Participants discussed the possibility of issuing joint general comments/recommendations on issues of common concern, and agreed that these would strengthen the role of the general comments.

IV. Strengthening the human rights treaty body system: streamlining reporting requirements

17. Mr. Filali, appointed by the third inter-committee meeting to be rapporteur on the draft harmonized reporting guidelines, reported to the meeting on the discussions in the various treaty bodies concerning the draft guidelines, noting that five committees had provided formal written comments (HRI/MC/2005/6, annex I and HRI/MC/2005/6/Add.1). Mr. Filali considered that there was no significant disagreement between the committees. Among the points of agreement, the committees welcomed the guidelines, which they considered would strengthen the process of drafting reports by States parties, but noted that the changes should not result in incomplete reporting or a loss of the specificities of the respective treaties, particularly with regard to "congruent" rights; that further refinement of the guidelines was necessary and that a working group of members could be established for this purpose; that failure to submit reports on time remained a matter of concern for all committees; that the committees favoured more sustained and regular cooperation; that States parties wishing to use the guidelines should be encouraged to do so, in consultation with OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women; that it was important that States parties set up, on a permanent basis, broadly representative institutional structures to coordinate the drafting and submission of their reports; and that workshops be convened to familiarize States parties with the coordinated reporting methodology. He recommended that a technical working group of members be established to finalize the guidelines in collaboration with the Secretariat; that continuing support be offered to States parties using the draft guidelines in the elaboration of their reports; that a coordinated approach by States parties to their reporting obligations be encouraged, supported by a permanent inclusive institutional framework; that the draft guidelines, once adopted be reviewed and further refined periodically, taking into account the experiences of States parties; and that a mechanism to supervise the general calendar for the presentation of reports to treaty bodies be established.

18. Participants welcomed Mr. Filali's report, several agreeing with the suggestion that a working group be constituted to finalize the guidelines, and the terms of reference of that working group were discussed. To the extent that the draft guidelines provided general guidance to States on reporting under all treaties, they were approved, and participants welcomed the content of the expanded core document relating to general background information and the general framework for the promotion and protection of human rights. Several participants reiterated the serious concerns of their committees with regard to the extent to which congruent provisions could, and should, be included in the expanded core document. In particular, there was concern about the position of CEDAW and CERD as a result of the inclusion of non-discrimination issues in the common core document. Some expressed the view that the inclusion of information on congruent provisions might result in a loss of the specific focus of these committees, although others noted that such an approach could provide possibilities for mainstreaming issues that those committees had elaborated over many years, including temporary special measures. Others added that information on congruent provisions might require constant updating, whereas the idea behind the common core document had been the provision of information on matters that tended to remain broadly stable. They also pointed out that the reporting burden on States could be eased significantly if periodic reports were limited to written responses to lists of issues. The possible role

of a common core document containing congruent provisions in promoting a holistic approach to the implementation of human rights obligations was also noted. It was observed that the idea of including information on the implementation of congruent substantive provisions had been reflected in the proposed common core document at the request of the second inter-committee meeting and fifteenth meeting of chairpersons (see A/58/350, annex). That approach had been endorsed by the third inter-committee meeting and sixteenth meeting of chairpersons, but participants considered that it required serious and careful consideration, as it was important to finalize a document that could be adopted by all committees.

19. Participants noted the uncertainty that had arisen as a result of the proposals for reform of the United Nations system and the proposal of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to consider options for a single treaty body, and noted the implications the proposals could have for the draft reporting guidelines. It was noted that the proposals for the harmonization of reporting requirements had been under consideration at least since September 2002, and the timetable for the finalization and adoption of the draft guidelines was discussed. It was underlined that, although the inter-committee meeting could recommend their adoption, each individual committee would have to adopt them before they became final.

20. Participants agreed that the proposed changes should facilitate reporting by States parties, rather than hinder them. It was agreed that conceptualizing reporting as a "burden" was unhelpful, and that States should be encouraged to view reporting as a positive and constructive process. The experience of those States that had begun to prepare reports on the basis of the draft reporting guidelines was recognized as an important source of information on the feasibility of the common core document. It was also recognized that the guidelines, once adopted, should be reviewed periodically and further improved, based on the practical experiences of States parties preparing reports in accordance with the guidelines, and the evaluation of those reports by treaty bodies. One participant noted that there was very little data on the extent to which States parties actually complied with the existing reporting guidelines of the individual treaty bodies. Most welcomed the suggestion that States parties should adopt a coordinated approach to reporting and be encouraged to establish appropriate coordinating structures to support their reporting under all of the treaties to which they were party, although such structures should not create additional work for States. The importance of technical cooperation to assist States in reporting was recognized, although it was noted this should not extend to the actual writing of reports, which was the responsibility of the States.

21. Mr. Riedel informed the meeting of work being undertaken by OHCHR to assist treaty bodies with regard to statistical information and human rights indicators. An expert meeting on human rights indicators had been held in Turku, Finland, from 10 to 13 March 2005, organized jointly by OHCHR and the Institute for Human Rights of Åbo Akademi University with the support of the Government of Finland. Mr. Riedel expressed the hope that the inter-committee meeting would support this work.

V. Dialogue with specialized agencies, funds and programmes and other entities of the United Nations

22. The inter-committee meeting met with representatives of the following specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). All highlighted the linkages between human rights and the work of the treaty bodies and their own mandates. The representatives of ILO and UNESCO outlined their efforts to develop synergies in the promotion and implementation of their own standards and international human rights treaties. UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO, noted that the recommendations of treaty bodies were becoming increasingly specific and therefore more useful for their field offices. The general comments and general recommendations of treaty bodies, to which agencies were also providing increasing input, were also considered important tools, both at headquarters and the field, which highlighted the importance of treaty body recommendations for the development of human rights-based approaches to programming.

23. Treaty body members expressed their appreciation for the cooperation with specialized agencies. Several members encouraged all entities to attend treaty body sessions and systematically provide information to the respective committees. The importance of increasing the specificity of the recommendations contained in the concluding observations/comments in order to facilitate implementation and follow-up in the field was recognized and the need for greater substantive input and advice from relevant agencies to enhance such specificity stressed. It was suggested that United Nations entities should develop a list of standard questions on issues relating to their mandates, although some concerns were raised that this might lead to greater uniformity, rather than country specificity, of recommendations. Nevertheless it was agreed that greater interaction between treaty body members and representatives of United Nations agencies would enhance members' substantive expertise on linkages between their respective areas of work. All representatives of United Nations agencies, programmes and funds indicated their willingness to increase interaction with treaty bodies, but stressed their human and financial resource constraints. It was suggested that the chairpersons might meet with heads of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to discuss modalities for greater cooperation.

VI. Dialogue with Non-Governmental Organizations

24. Representatives of the following NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) were present during the dialogue: Amnesty International, Association for the Prevention of Torture, Bahá'í International Community, Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, Franciscans International, Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quaker United Nations Office), Human Rights Watch, International Catholic Migration Commission, International Commission of Jurists, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, International Service for Human Rights, International Women's Rights

Action Watch, Lutheran World Federation, and World Organization against Torture. Other NGOs attending were the Kharkiv Centre for Women Studies, the NGO Group for Convention on the Rights of the Child and 3D→Trade — Human Rights — Equitable Economy.

25. NGOs welcomed the opportunity to discuss matters of common concern and their interaction with human rights treaty bodies and follow-up to treaty body recommendations at the national level. Members of the treaty bodies thanked the NGOs for their valuable contributions to their work and their efforts to promote implementation of human rights treaties at the national level.

26. NGOs underlined the importance of concluding observations/comments as a tool for advocacy and monitoring, and reiterated the need for specific and implementable recommendations. Other issues related to methods of work were also discussed, including non-reporting, early warning and urgent action procedures, lists of issues, and joint general comments and recommendations. Several NGO representatives highlighted certain thematic areas which they considered required further attention by treaty bodies, such as violations relating to sexual orientation and gender identity, and the impact of trade policies on the enjoyment of human rights. Many stressed the need for wider ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

27. A number of NGOs provided comments on the revised guidelines for an expanded core document and treaty-specific targeted reports (HRI/MC/2005/3) and all emphasized the importance of their involvement in the process of reform of the reporting system.

VII. Dialogue with national human rights institutions

28. For the first time, members of the inter-committee meeting met with representatives of national human rights institutions: Margaret Sekaggya, Chairperson of the Uganda Human Rights Commission, and José Luis Soberanes, President, and Salvador Campos Icardo, Executive Secretary, of the Human Rights Commission of Mexico. Mr. Kjaerum also spoke in his capacity as Chairperson of the Danish National Human Rights Commission and of the International Coordinating Committee of national human rights institutions.

29. The representatives welcomed the opportunity to engage with the treaty bodies and hoped that it marked the beginning of sustained cooperation. They spoke of their role in encouraging treaty ratification, harmonization of national legislation with international treaties, encouraging States parties to report, participating in consultations during the preparation of reports by States parties, submitting parallel reports (where appropriate), and ensuring effective follow-up to the treaty body recommendations. They also sought greater participation in the treaty body processes including direct participation in treaty body sessions.

30. Members of treaty bodies noted the historic nature of the inter-committee meeting's first encounter with national human rights institutions and echoed the call for more and deeper involvement by national human rights institutions in their work. They hoped to be able to develop modalities for enhanced cooperation. Certain treaty bodies had already interacted with national human rights institutions;

some had requested information from those institutions during the preparation of lists of issues, during the pre-sessional working groups, or in the plenary sessions. It was hoped that such practices would be adopted by all treaty bodies in a unified manner.

31. Members acknowledged that national human rights institutions had different mandates, geo-political environments and resources, and raised a number of issues that should be considered when discussing the interaction of treaty bodies with national human rights institutions. They included compliance with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles); the need for national human rights institutions to maintain their independence and, as far as possible, not be part of government delegations to treaty body sessions (most members called for national institutions to make independent statements); and the need to be particularly attentive to economic, social and cultural rights. Committee members recognized the role that national human rights institutions could play in the inquiry procedure of treaty bodies, where such procedures existed. Accreditation of national human rights institutions was discussed and representatives of national human rights institutions indicated that strengthening of the Credentials Committee of the International Coordination Committee of national institutions would help address concerns regarding compliance with the Paris Principles.

32. The Chairperson of CEDAW invited the National Human Rights Commission of Mexico to interact with the Committee with regard to its inquiry into the situation of women in the State of Juarez. That was the first time that CEDAW had requested a national institution to engage directly with it in the context of its inquiry procedure, although it would discuss its relationship with national human rights institutions more generally at a future session.

VIII. Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

33. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, informed the meeting about the Secretary-General's ideas on strengthening the human rights treaty body system, most recently put forward in his report, "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005 and Add.1-3) and the ideas set out in the OHCHR Plan of Action (A/59/2005/Add.3), which the Secretary-General had requested and which subsequently was incorporated into his report. The High Commissioner outlined the Secretary-General's proposal for a Human Rights Council, which would exercise universal scrutiny of the implementation by all Member States of their human rights obligations through a peer review mechanism which would not duplicate or replace the treaty body reporting system. She reaffirmed that both she and the Secretary-General considered the human rights treaty body system as the cornerstone of the United Nations human rights programme, and that the positive and successful nature of the reporting system stimulated the creation of constituencies to promote the implementation of human rights. The treaty body system also provided a sound foundation for country engagement, a central concept of the Plan of Action, and she underlined that she was committed to providing greater support to the treaty bodies so that their work could play an even more significant role in the process of human rights reform at the national level. Country engagement would also ensure that

treaty bodies received accurate and relevant information from the national level for their dialogue with States parties, allowing for the formulation of specific, locally-implementable concluding observations and the construction of strategic and sustainable partnerships with stakeholders at the national level.

34. The significant challenges facing the treaty body system included late and non-reporting by States parties, backlogs in the consideration of reports and/or individual communications by some treaty bodies, and the persisting gap between treaty body recommendations and their implementation at the national level. Action to address those issues had so far focused on coordinating working methods and streamlining reporting requirements, including through the expansion of the core document to include information on substantive rights congruent to all or several treaties. OHCHR had been providing assistance to Angola and Timor-Leste which had decided to pilot the guidelines, and other States would also soon begin using them. Streamlined reporting to all treaty bodies would inevitably strengthen the system, allowing all seven committees to function in a strong, unified manner, but it was not sufficient to address all of the challenges, given the prospect of universal ratification and the possibility of further normative instruments creating their own treaty bodies. She was therefore convinced of the need, in the long term, to consolidate the working of the treaty bodies through the creation of a unified, standing treaty body. She would develop proposals for consideration by an inter-governmental consultation to be convened in 2006 as a unified treaty body system would only be possible if all the committees were able to function in partnership, ensuring a holistic approach, jurisprudential coherence and increased visibility, she proposed that responsibility for servicing CEDAW be transferred from New York to OHCHR in Geneva. The High Commissioner underlined her intention to ensure that these proposals for a unified body would be developed in full consultation with the treaty bodies, States parties and other stakeholders and considered the role of the committee members to be pivotal in this enterprise. OHCHR would produce a concept paper early in 2006 which would take into account the current human and financial resource requirements of the present system of seven committees with a combined membership of 115 experts, which met for a total of 57 weeks each year. It would also take into account the backlog of reports and pending petitions and suggest modalities for a permanent, standing body that could meet in chambers, consisting of properly remunerated, qualified members, most likely elected by States parties.

IX. Points of agreement of the fourth inter-committee meeting to be transmitted to the seventeenth meeting of chairpersons

35. Participants at the fourth inter-committee meeting agreed to transmit the following points to the seventeenth meeting of chairpersons.

Mandate of the Chairperson

I. The fourth inter-committee meeting decided that the Chairperson of the current inter-committee meeting should report on the implementation of its recommendations at the beginning of the next inter-committee meeting, before the election of the Chairperson of that meeting.

The inter-committee meeting

II. The fourth inter-committee meeting agreed with the view expressed by many, including States parties, that the inter-committee meeting provides a useful forum for discussing matters of mutual concern and strengthening coordination between the treaty bodies, and recommended that the General Assembly consider the possibility of convening such meetings on an annual basis.

Draft harmonized reporting guidelines

III. With regard to the draft harmonized reporting guidelines, the inter-committee meeting recommended:

(a) That an analysis be undertaken by the Secretariat of the extent to which States parties comply with the existing reporting guidelines for each treaty in the preparation of their reports to the treaty bodies;

(b) That a technical working group be established, composed of a member designated by each committee, in order to finalize the draft guidelines for consideration and eventual adoption by each of the committees. The Secretariat was requested to arrange for the working group to convene as soon as possible after its establishment. The working group, in consultation with the Secretariat, should, inter alia:

- review the revised draft harmonized guidelines set forth in document HRI/MC/2005/3;
- consider an options paper prepared by the Secretariat on the substantive content of the common core document;
- discuss whether and, if so, to which extent congruent substantive provisions in the treaties should be included in the core document;
- consider the results of the analysis prepared by the Secretariat in accordance paragraph (a) above.

Coordinated approach to reporting by States parties

IV. The inter-committee meeting recommended that all States parties consider adopting a coordinated approach to reporting under all of the treaties to which they are party, and consider the option of establishing appropriate and stable coordinating institutions or mechanisms in order to support coherent, timely, sustained and thorough reporting.

Lists of issues

V. The inter-committee meeting reaffirmed its earlier recommendation that each committee should adopt the practice of producing a list of issues and questions. Such lists of issues could relate to both initial and periodic reports and should be submitted to States parties well in advance of the session at which the relevant State party's report is to be considered by the committee.

Reservations

VI. The inter-committee meeting recommended that a working group, composed of a member of each committee, be convened early in 2006 to consider an updated version of the report on reservations prepared by the Secretariat (HRI/MC/2005/5) and to report to the fifth inter-committee meeting. The inter-committee meeting also called on the Secretariat to update the report regularly.

Standardization of technical terminology

VII. The inter-committee meeting recommended that the question of standardization of terminology be considered by each committee during the course of the year and that the Secretariat prepare a paper, based on the comments received, containing revised proposals for consideration at the fifth inter-committee meeting.

NGO participation

VIII. The inter-committee meeting recommended that NGOs should send information well in advance of treaty body sessions to allow committee members the opportunity to take these important submissions into account.

IX. The inter-committee meeting recalled the recommendation of the sixteenth meeting of chairpersons regarding the modalities of NGO participation in the treaty bodies and recommended that the issue be placed on the agenda of the fifth inter-committee meeting.

Liaison with specialized agencies and United Nations funds and programmes

X. The inter-committee meeting reiterated its previous recommendation that each treaty body appoint a focal point to liaise with specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system in order to facilitate more effective interaction on country-specific as well as thematic issues and follow-up.

XI. The inter-committee meeting recommended that the Secretariat explore the possibility of arranging a meeting with heads of United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes.

National human rights institutions

XII. The inter-committee meeting recommended that engagement with national human rights institutions should continue and requested the Secretariat to arrange for such institutions to attend future inter-committee meetings when appropriate items are on the agenda.

XIII. The inter-committee meeting requested that OHCHR should consider holding a round table of national human rights institutions and treaty body experts to discuss cooperation on matters of common concern.

XIV. The inter-committee meeting further recommended that the fifth inter-committee meeting consider developing harmonized criteria for the participation of national human rights institutions in treaty body sessions

in order to enhance the quality of information provided to the treaty bodies.

XV. The inter-committee meeting requested OHCHR to produce a comparative compilation of existing treaty body practice with regard to national institutions.

Ratification of the core international human rights treaties

XVI. The inter-committee meeting recommended that all treaty bodies actively promote ratification of the other core international human rights treaties, in particular the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in their constructive dialogue with States parties and in their concluding observations.

Follow-up to concluding observations

XVII. The inter-committee meeting recalled its earlier recommendation that each committee should continue to consider adopting procedures to ensure effective follow-up to its concluding observations/comments, including the appointment of a rapporteur on follow-up. It further recommended that follow-up could be conducted in open meetings.

Working methods

XVIII. The inter-committee meeting noted the report of the Secretariat on the working methods of the treaty bodies (HRI/MC/2005/4) and, in accordance with the recommendation of the third inter-committee meeting, requested the Secretariat to keep this document updated and to submit it to the fifth inter-committee meeting.

General comments

XIX. The inter-committee meeting agreed that treaty bodies could consider drafting joint general comments on issues of common concern.

Recommendations of the third inter-committee meeting

XX. The inter-committee meeting noted that certain matters raised in the recommendations of the third inter-committee meeting had not been considered during the meeting and recommended that these issues be included in the agenda of the fifth inter-committee meeting.

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Culture of peace

Midterm global review of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010**

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 59/142 and 59/143.

* A/60/150.

** Due to the inclusion of an annex presenting the summary of the report prepared by Fundación Cultura de Paz on contributions by civil society organizations on the midpoint of the Culture of Peace Decade, this report was submitted late.

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Midterm global review of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010

Summary

The present report, prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), presents a midterm global review of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 and information on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 59/142 and 59/143 of 15 December 2004 on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation and on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World respectively. It reviews the work undertaken by the United Nations system, civil society organizations and UNESCO National Commissions in those fields, including progress made, obstacles faced and needs arising, and makes recommendations to maintain visibility and momentum on the culture of peace between the midpoint and the completion of the International Decade. In an annex to the UNESCO report, the United Nations Secretariat has prepared for information a summary of some of the views expressed by civil society organizations, as compiled by the Fundación Cultura de Paz.

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I. Introduction

A. Background information

1. In 2005, the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 entered its fifth year. According to the Programme of Action of the Decade, and pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 55/47 of 29 November 2000 and 59/143 of 15 December 2004, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has undertaken a midterm global review of the progress made during the first five years of the Decade towards the achievement of its objectives. The findings of that review are presented in the present report which is prepared in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 55/47, and takes into account all available information on the progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action at the international, regional, national and local levels, as well as the observance of the Decade at its midpoint, and makes recommendations for action during the five remaining years of the Decade.

B. Midterm global review process

2. In December 2004, UNESCO launched a worldwide survey on a culture of peace by addressing two questionnaires to, respectively, the UNESCO National Commissions and other principal actors, including international and national civil society organizations. In addition, a letter requesting contributions to the present report was sent to 14 focal points in United Nations agencies and institutions. The purpose of the survey was to take stock of activities implemented in pursuance of the objectives of the Decade and to request the principal actors to highlight progress made, obstacles to the development of a culture of peace and recommendations for the remainder of the Decade. As of 30 June 2005, 110 replies had been received.

3. Among those 110 replies, 79 were from civil society organizations operating at the local, national or international levels, 26 from the UNESCO National Commissions and 5 from United Nations agencies and institutions.

4. The information contained in the present report provides an overview of the numerous culture of peace activities currently in progress throughout the world; presenting complete and detailed documentation on all such activities would clearly be beyond the scope of the present report. Although some institutions involved in culture of peace activities did not take part in the review, information regarding their activities is available on the UNESCO culture of peace website (http://www.unesco.org/cp).

II. Overview of activities during the first five years of the Decade

A. United Nations system

1. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

5. In connection with the Decade, UNESCO is tasked with coordinating and directly implementing activities in its areas of competence according to the Decade's Programme of Action. In its coordinating role, the task of UNESCO is to maintain a global public awareness campaign and promote and disseminate information on the various activities implemented by the actors who are involved in pursuing the Decade's goals. UNESCO launched a public awareness campaign at the beginning of the Decade with the Manifesto 2000, which had been signed by 75,845,317 people at the time that the present report was written (that figure represents more than 1 per cent of the world's population). An interactive website was set up during the International Year for a Culture of Peace in 2000 that allows all interested actors working in support of a culture of peace to disseminate information on their activities (events and long-term projects) with a view to increasing the exchange of information among actors and to foster networking and partnerships for the Decade. To date, 1,181 organizations at the global, regional and national levels have published information on their activities on the website. Those activities include 1,332 events and 252 long- or medium-term projects from all over the world.

6. In addition, UNESCO, in cooperation with the UNESCO-NGO Liaison Committee, launched a project entitled "Heritage and a culture of peace" in December 2002. The aim was to identify a monument or symbol of local heritage that represents a vehicle for dialogue, peace and reconciliation so as to promote ownership of a culture of peace by the local population and the general public. More than 300 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that maintain official relations with UNESCO were invited to participate in the initiative. The results of the campaign were presented in November 2004 during a meeting of NGOs that maintain official relations with UNESCO.

7. In its implementing role, UNESCO responded to the objectives of the Decade according to its areas of competence: education, culture, the natural sciences, the social and human sciences, and communication and information.

8. In education, the Organization focused its activities on education for peace, human rights and linguistic diversity. In that context, the work of the UNESCO Education Sector included the development of national plans and programmes in human rights education through national and subregional projects. The main objective was to help Member States modify legislation and practice in their educational policies to ensure that values such as human rights, peace, democratic participation, tolerance, non-violence and intercultural understanding were included in curricula and to ensure that the corresponding educational processes were consistent with the teaching of such values (taking into account the sociocultural background of each country). In addition, the Education Sector assisted member States in the development of educational systems capable of promoting elements related to the acquisition of values, attitudes and skills that favour just human development. UNESCO is also responsible for the development and monitoring of

international normative instruments on human rights education, namely the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the 1995 Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy. UNESCO identified and assessed the general trends and policy developments in education for peace, human rights and democracy within national education systems and non-formal settings on the basis of the information provided by member States. UNESCO also cooperated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on a peace education programme for countries in emergency situations. Activities involved the development of textbooks and other learning materials that focused on cultivating learning societies in which peace, human rights and tolerance are at the core of the curriculum. The ultimate aim is to build national capacities for the sustainable development of high quality textbooks and other learning materials which incorporate universally shared values adapted to local contexts. In order to provide technical assistance to member States, UNESCO produced and disseminated educational materials on peace, human rights and linguistic diversity. In addition, UNESCO created or sponsored several networks to promote education for a culture of peace, such as the Associated Schools Project Network, the Network of UNESCO Chairs, the Network of Human Rights Research and Training Institutions, and the Electronic Network on Human Rights Education in Latin America.

9. In the area of culture, activities focused on the promotion of the principles and the action plan laid out in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by the thirty-first session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2001. UNESCO sought to promote cultural diversity and encourage pluralism and dialogue among cultures and civilizations as the best guarantee of development and peace. The Organization assisted member States in formulating pluralist policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens and concentrated on creating opportunities for dialogue through the following activities:

(a) elaboration of educational tools for member States with a view to reducing stereotypes and prejudices;

(b) awareness-raising and furthering intercultural dialogue in different regions (for example Central Asia, the Arab World and the Mediterranean area) among the general public and the academic community;

(c) elaboration of methodologies derived from good practices in cultural pluralism, identified through pilot projects and validated at the national and local levels;

(d) the development of regional networks for mutual learning and sharing of cultural practices.

10. A specific aspect of the work of UNESCO relates to article 4 of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which calls for a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples. In that field, UNESCO initiated the mapping of cultural resources and the identification of best practices related to cultural pluralism. The work led to the formulation of methodologies for the mapping of cultural resources, which are used to train indigenous communities. In addition, UNESCO provided support to indigenous communities by organizing workshops on

international human rights law relevant to indigenous peoples and minority groups, supporting and disseminating materials on indigenous cultures and strengthening communication capacities of indigenous peoples through the use of information and communication technologies to promote intercultural dialogue, diversity and local cultural expression.

11. In the field of communication, the action of UNESCO in the framework of the Decade has been focused on supporting independent media in conflict zones and on the use of information and communication technologies to promote intercultural dialogue. In the light of the devastating role that war and hatred propaganda play in zones of conflict and tension, UNESCO, in cooperation with the United Nations and international professional media organizations, has been providing assistance to local media, independent from warring factions. Activities in that field included the following:

(a) the creation and development of independent community radio stations;

(b) distribution networks for print press;

(c) programme banks for the exchange of information and programmes;

(d) the training of journalists and media professionals in non-partisan and independent reporting techniques;

(e) the development of new press houses for journalists and networks of exchange and cooperation between journalists from antagonistic groups;

(f) support to the establishment of the necessary conditions for independent media by providing expertise to national and international authorities seeking to adapt their media legislation to internationally recognized standards of freedom of expression, peace and tolerance;

(g) support to networks of media professionals committed to promoting peace and tolerance, such as the *Red Latinoamericana de Radios para una Cultura de Paz* in Latin America or the Israeli-Palestinian Media Forum.

12. In parallel, UNESCO enhanced its efforts to promote the involvement of youth as actors of intercultural dialogue for peace through projects such as Reel Intercultural Dialogue: a youthful take on humanity and conflict — projecting the need for peace. That project was initiated in 2002 with the aim of providing cinema and television schools with the opportunity to use their most talented students to produce content for young people that reflects local perspectives on global issues. As a result, a series of five short fiction films on intercultural dialogue was produced by UNESCO in collaboration with cinema and television schools in Burkina Faso, India, Israel, Mexico and Romania. The films were shown on television and at several international film festivals around the world. In an effort to improve dialogue and mutual understanding by using information and communication technologies to facilitate the "meeting of the minds", a number of activities that focused on developing the ability to promote dialogue, enhancing respect for human values among youth leaders and elaborating and disseminating methodologies for conflict resolution and peace education were implemented in the context of the INFOYOUTH worldwide information network on youth-related issues.

13. In the field of social and human sciences, UNESCO elaborated an ethical, normative and educational framework for the promotion of human security on a regional basis. Since 2001, regional meetings have been held in Africa, Latin America and East Asia to assess needs and elaborate specific action plans for human security. Additionally, in 2003 an international meeting on "Violence and its causes: a stocktaking" was organized, which resulted in the launching of a series of publications on the diverse forms of violence that aimed at conceptualizing the different categories of violent behaviour and at providing best practices and guidelines on how to overcome them. The 2001 Durban Declaration and Programme of Action gave a new and more concrete framework to UNESCO's activities in that field. The framework is embodied in the new Integrated Strategy to Combat Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which was approved by the UNESCO General Conference at its thirty-second session in 2003. The Strategy is based on various thematic studies and a series of regional consultations. Understanding that intolerance may take many shapes and may differ from region to region, UNESCO has undertaken to tailor its Integrated Strategy to the needs of each region. As an example of that work, the International Coalition of Cities against Racism, a network established by UNESCO and organized primarily at the regional level, aims at developing and promoting policies and messages countering racist and discriminatory policies at the local and municipal levels.

14. In natural sciences, UNESCO continued to stress the need for an ethical and sustainable sharing of resources through its programmes in science, the environment and sustainable development, which aim to improve human security through a better management of the environment. To enhance human and institutional capacities in science and technology, capacity-building in science and technology for development was supported to allow the widest possible participation in knowledge societies, and to adapt science policies to societal needs.

15. In addition to sectoral projects, UNESCO has continuously promoted the involvement of young people in culture of peace activities through building the capacity of a number of youth organizations in conflict resolution and by supporting youth organizations in their work for peace. In addition, several international events that involve young people and promote the visions of youth in peacebuilding have been organized. In regard to the work by UNESCO on gender and peace, the Organization assisted member States by reinforcing and supporting women's capacity for leadership and non-violent conflict resolution and prevention and promoted the elimination of stereotyped expectations and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. Women's priorities and vision of development goals and approaches are addressed and promoted through greater participation of women at all levels and in all areas of UNESCO action, and through region-specific programmes and activities. Examples of that work include research projects (in the Great Lakes region and the Palestinian territories) initiated to explore the gender dynamics of conflict, peacebuilding and reconstruction by examining the ways in which women are involved in and affected by global tensions and armed conflicts, and by promoting women's involvement in conflict transformation.

16. The concept of a culture of peace goes hand-in-hand with the dialogue among civilizations. It is recognized that all cultures and civilizations are equal and that dialogue should be based on those commonly shared values and ethical principles espoused by the culture of peace. Such values and principles include tolerance,

respect for others, mutual understanding, respect for cultural diversity and adherence to non-violence and the principles of peaceful coexistence.

17. Today, globalization and the emergence of new challenges and threats to humankind have made the need for dialogue among peoples more important than ever. In our interconnected world, there is increased interaction among all cultures. That has given rise to new forms of exchange and understanding among people and unprecedented opportunities for the transmission of ideas. In fact, our world has never been more "connected": new information and communication technologies, increased integration and dynamic migration flows allow people in many parts of the world to learn about each other, to communicate their differences, and exchange ideas, knowledge and values.

18. However, at the same time as globalization encourages exchange and interaction, we also witness the emergence or re-emergence of disturbing forms of ignorance and conflict. Those new "forms of ignorances", reflected in misunderstandings, stereotypes and xenophobia, reveal an ignorance of cultural diversity. They also reflect a deep-seated ignorance of the increasingly acute social differences between continents, regions and countries and within countries and of other visions for the future development of our world. Outbreaks of violence and the emergence of "new" types of conflict in various regions of the world have even led to speculations about a "clash of civilizations": the world is seen by some as divided into opposing cultures, ideologies and religious outlooks that are in increasing conflict with one another.

19. A commitment to both the culture of peace and the dialogue among cultures and civilizations is also a commitment to fight terrorism, as terror rests always and everywhere upon prejudices, intolerance, exclusion and, above all, on the rejection of any dialogue. Thus, especially in the context of globalization, dialogue among cultures and civilizations and a culture of peace have the potential to become engines to bolster peace and security, thereby reconciling conflicts, reinforcing cultural diversity and advancing sustainable development.

20. For that reason, UNESCO continues to promote both the Culture of Peace and the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples within both its medium-term strategy for 2002-2007 and its programme and budget for 2004-2005 along with that of 2006-2007. In order to mobilize and advance a dialogue among different groups in society, UNESCO has organized and supported a series of international meetings and conferences in all regions of the world, some of them in zones with a history of conflict and tensions. The important declarations resulting from those international forums all highlight a commitment to common and universal values which constitute the very basis of the dialogue among civilizations. Those values include tolerance and respect for the other, the upholding of cultural diversity, sustainable development and the commitment to democratic practices and peace. Those declarations also provide a framework for concrete activities which should guide UNESCO action to ensure that the dialogue among cultures and civilizations promotes diversity and pluralism and acts as an effective instrument of positive transformation.

21. In 2003, the UNESCO General Conference adopted a major resolution calling for new perspectives in the dialogue among civilizations and a strengthening of the Organization's activities, particularly at the regional and subregional levels. The resolution also explicitly calls upon Governments and civil society to ensure the

empowerment of women and youth in efforts to foster the dialogue among cultures and civilizations. Following that resolution and in order to take dialogue "from the conference hall into policies and practices", UNESCO has committed itself to concrete activities in all its areas of competence. That entails a particular focus on regional and subregional areas, a deliberate choice of thematic issues and the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders beyond governmental actors only.

2. International Labour Organization

22. An important part of the contribution by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to a culture of peace and non-violence is its intervention in the field of prevention and rehabilitation of children affected by war, implemented in the framework of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. In October 2003, the Programme, in collaboration with the in focus programme "IFP-Crises" and with the financial support of the United States Department of Labour, launched a major subregional programme entitled "Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflicts in Central Africa". Burundi, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda participated in the project.

23. As regards children affected by war, education is also considered as an exit strategy for children demobilized from conflict and as a preventive measure for those at risk. Examples of intervention in that area are the refurbishment of school buildings, equipment or teaching materials, financial support for redesigning appropriate curricula, recruitment of teachers or other required staff, the development of teacher training and related materials with teachers' organizations, provision of non-formal education to war-affected children and support for the direct and indirect costs of schooling for a fixed period. The programme focuses on Burundi, Colombia, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Philippines, Rwanda and Sri Lanka, and is also applied in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

24. In addition, the ILO has developed a programme called the Youth Sport Programme that contributes to insert youth in post-conflict countries or countries that have experienced political turmoil through partnerships with the sport community. Tests and pilot activities are being carried out in Albania, El Salvador and Mozambique.

3. World Health Organization

25. In the last 10 years the World Health Organization (WHO) has devoted substantial attention to addressing violence as a major public-health problem. In October 2002, WHO launched the *World Report on Violence and Health*, the first report of its kind. The report described the extent of violence as a global public-health problem, set out a public-health-oriented prevention strategy, and made nine recommendations that are the foundation for the violence prevention work of WHO. The Global Campaign for Violence Prevention was launched immediately after the release of the *World Report* in October 2002 and continues today, providing a platform for violence prevention advocacy and activities. The objectives of the campaign are to raise awareness about the problem of violence, highlight the crucial role that public health can play in addressing its causes and consequences and encourage action at every level of society. In response to the launch of the *World*

Report on Violence and Health, the World Health Assembly passed resolution WHA 56.24, which urged member States to promote the report, appoint a ministry of health focal point for violence prevention and prepare a national report on violence and violence prevention. As of October 2004, over 40 countries had launched the report and nominated health ministry focal points; five countries had prepared national reports on violence and health (Belgium, Costa Rica, France, Jordan and the Russian Federation), with 14 additional countries (Brazil, France, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Kingdom) planning reports for 2005-2006. The *World Report* has sparked several other regional resolutions and commitments notably in Africa where the Heads of States members of the African Union (AU) passed a resolution in 2003 endorsing the recommendations of the *World Report on Violence and Health* and requesting member States to develop national plans of action for violence prevention and systems for data collection on violence. The AU resolution also requested member States to declare 2005 the "African Year of Prevention of Violence", for the purpose of scaling up and coordinating violence prevention policies and activities.

26. The World Health Organization has also been active for many years in addressing sexual violence and intimate partner violence. In 1996, WHO began the multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women in order to obtain reliable data on the root causes, magnitude and consequences of violence against women. In addition, to help ensure that women and children who have been sexually abused have access to adequate care, WHO began an initiative in 2001 to strengthen the health sector's response to sexual violence. That initiative includes the development of guidelines for providing care to sexual assault survivors and the development of a framework (for release in 2005) to guide health-sector policies related to sexual violence. WHO, with financial support from the Global Forum for Health Research, began the Sexual Violence Research Initiative in 2001 to build an experienced and committed network of researchers, policymakers, activists and donors to ensure that the many aspects of sexual violence are addressed from the perspective of different disciplines and cultures. The central activities of the Initiative include providing information and updates on sexual violence research and research methods through its website and e-mail discussion group; identifying gaps in the knowledge base; and promoting research on sexual violence by providing information on funders, helping to link researchers from different parts of the world and supporting requests for proposals on key areas that will advance knowledge about sexual violence and inform interventions.

27. The World Health Organization also initiated several partnerships for violence prevention, including the Violence Prevention Alliance — a network of WHO member State Governments, non-governmental and community-based organizations and private, international and intergovernmental agencies working to prevent violence — the Council of Europe, the United Nations Development Programme and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations on the United Nations Collaboration for the Prevention of Interpersonal Violence and the Armed Violence Prevention Programme.

4. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

28. In 2002, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with UNESCO, launched the Education for Rural People flagship partnership within the framework of Education for All and in follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002), where it was launched. The initiative seeks to use education as a means to empower rural people to become fully integrated actors of development and consequently less apt to be involved in conflicts and more resilient to recover from them. Actions have included an assessment study on the state of public policies on education for rural people which resulted in the publication of a book entitled *Education for Rural Development: Toward New Policy Responses*; policy dialogue and field projects on education for rural people; the reinforcement of national capacities in order to help Governments to promote projects at the country and regional levels; and the promotion of new partnerships between ministries of education and agriculture and among Government agencies, civil society and donors.

5. University for Peace

29. The University for Peace Council approved in 2001 a five-year programme to revitalize the University with the following four major goals: the development and teaching of a coherent academic programme and its dissemination through state-of-the-art technologies; building up a critical mass of students and faculty at University headquarters; the extension of University activities into major regions of the world in response to its global mandate; and the establishment of a sound financial and management structure.

30. In that context, the new master's academic programme that was launched in 2001 at the San José, Costa Rica, Campus was expanded to include six M.A. programmes by August 2004. They are in International Law and Human Rights; International Law and the Settlement of Disputes; Natural Resources and Sustainable Development (offered as a dual-degree programme in partnership with the American University, Washington, D.C.); Gender and Peace Building; International Peace Studies; and Peace Education. A master's degree programme has also been fully developed in Environmental Security and Peace — a critical issue for the twenty-first century — and will be operational in August 2005.

31. The University has also been converting and disseminating worldwide teaching materials — which include specialized courses, individual teaching modules and eventually full graduate programmes — through state-of-the-art technologies. The specialized Centre on Education and Information Technologies has been established at University headquarters and it is now developing programmes on the dissemination of curricular materials and on distance education, "UPEACE GlobalEd". The objective of the University of Peace in that field is to develop the substantive content, the methodology and the international networks and partnerships which will make possible the dissemination of knowledge and skills in the field of education for peace to partner universities and individuals throughout the developing world.

6. United Nations University

32. The United Nations University (UNU) organized two major research projects that dealt exclusively with the International Decade, the broad objective of which

was to advance knowledge of the impact of armed conflict on children and on the challenges in improving their situation. In those projects, UNU approached children as actors rather than victims, emphasizing the need for a human security analysis in addition to traditional child rights advocacy. The research agenda for the Children and War: Impact Conference held in Canada was focused on identifying and filling critical knowledge gaps regarding the scope, nature and impact of armed conflict on children and linking the work of scholars and practitioners. The project "Interact — Children in Armed Conflict" which began in 2001, included applied research on security issues and addressed the problem of child soldiers in Africa through a survey of the child soldiers problem; a survey of military personnel about their perceptions of child soldiers; research on the plight of girl combatants; and creating a training module for international and regional peacekeeping forces on how to deal with child soldiers.

B. National level

33. Twenty-six UNESCO National Commissions, representing all regions, responded to questionnaires. Forty-two national or regional civil society organizations provided contributions to the report.

34. The following information is a consolidated analysis of the main areas of action, the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in promoting a culture of peace as reported by the respondents.

1. Implementing agencies

35. In most countries, the entity in charge of coordinating culture of peace activities at the national level is the UNESCO National Commission. National Commissions coordinate with UNESCO field offices and work with civil society and non-governmental actors to implement the objectives of the Decade. In several countries, the implementation of the programme of action is done through specific ministries or institutions according to the areas pertaining to a culture of peace. In some countries, a formal mechanism was established for the national coordination of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and associations working for a culture of peace. An example is the peace forum network, which was created in the Asia-Pacific region and consists of NGOs working to promote the culture of peace, in close relation with the UNESCO National Commissions in that region.

2. Main areas of action

Actions to foster a culture of peace through education

36. Education for a culture of peace was promoted at the formal and non-formal levels. At the formal level, respondents reported that training was offered to assist teachers in promoting a culture of peace; university programmes and research projects were developed on themes such as human rights, peace education and gender studies; and in some countries national plans and policies were adopted to integrate culture of peace education into the national curricula. Peace education guidelines and manuals were also developed in or translated into local languages and disseminated to schools and youth organizations. Teachers exchanged information and best practices in promoting a culture of peace through the UNESCO

Associated Schools Network. It was also reported that art education proved to be a valuable means of developing cultural values and ideals for a culture of peace.

37. At the non-formal level, culture of peace activities were offered to vulnerable children and youth. For example, several National Commissions and field offices in the Caribbean and Latin America opened schools on weekends to support cultural exchanges and provide education on civic values through games and training to vulnerable youth and children affected by crisis. To involve young people in long-term action for a culture of peace, youth organizations were created. Capacity-building and training were also provided to youth organizations, military personnel and leaders of associations on leadership, human rights and conflict resolution and transformation.

38. Furthermore, several new UNESCO Chairs were created in areas related to a culture of peace.

Actions to promote sustainable economic and social development

39. Respondents reported activities aimed at combating poverty and at enhancing economic and social development through capacity-building for grass-roots organizations, support to women in rural areas and technical and vocational training. Activities involved working with rural communities to protect the environment through the creation of income-generating activities; improving access to basic services in education, health and nutrition for families in extreme poverty; training professionals on human rights and democratic governance issues; developing alternative conflict-resolution mechanisms; developing policies for the advancement of women and gender equality; and developing policies to recognize the contributions of indigenous communities to cultural diversity.

Actions to promote respect for all human rights and actions to ensure equality between women and men

40. To promote human rights in Asia and the Pacific, studies were initiated in Central Asia that address the application of international human rights treaties and the mechanisms and possibilities for improvement.

41. Activities to protect and promote children and women's rights included the adoption of national policies and plans with actions for gender mainstreaming in development plans and the reinforcement of women's participation in decision-making. Furthermore, actions included the creation of specific departments or institutions for the protection of those rights, the reform of family codes and the creation of mechanisms at the national and regional levels for the protection of children from trafficking and sexual exploitation. Projects in Asia and the Pacific focused on the role of boys and men in promoting gender equality and on problems associated with bride abduction by organizing training targeting young people, and seminars.

42. With regard to the protection of children from abuse and neglect, a number of activities were carried out that included training workshops for education professionals, the integration of child protection concepts into curricula for children, the introduction of systems for early detection and prevention, studies on the phenomenon of violence in school and the production of a manual on protecting children from violence. In addition, awareness-raising activities to sensitize the

general public were implemented through the dissemination of materials translated into several languages.

Actions to foster democratic participation

43. Activities to foster democratic participation included providing support to countries in transition by advising them on how to foster democratic electoral processes and by promoting the use of community radios as tools for improving democratic participation.

Actions to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity

44. Creating opportunities for intercultural dialogue is a powerful tool for promoting mutual understanding, tolerance and solidarity. In that regard, activities comprised of organizing encounters among children from different countries or cultural backgrounds in performing art festivals, training youth in tolerance and conflict resolution through peer-to-peer approaches, launching a study on world heritage education to learn and care about the significance of a common heritage and organizing national and regional conferences on the role of women in intercultural dialogue and on women's contribution to a culture of peace.

45. Several respondents stressed the particular attention given to the implementation of comprehensive programmes for violence prevention targeting youth, families and Government personnel. Programmes focused on sensitizing the population to domestic violence and youth violence issues, initiating research and studies on those issues, creating specific institutions to provide policy advice to Governments and monitoring the implementation of activities.

Actions to support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge

46. Activities geared towards raising public awareness of a culture of peace included peace marches, concerts, seminars, Manifesto 2000 campaigns, intercultural and inter-religious gatherings, exhibitions, writing, painting, photography and sports competitions, radio and television programmes, translation and dissemination of the programme of action into local languages and other actions aimed at increasing the involvement of the public at large in culture of peace activities.

47. To support the free flow of information and knowledge about a culture of peace, activities were undertaken to assist the development of public broadcasting services.

48. In the Arab States, regional workshops, equally attended by men and women, were organized in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNDP to address issues related to a culture of peace which included the role of the media in promoting human, economic, social and cultural rights; the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the role of civil society.

Actions to promote international peace and security

49. In areas affected by long-term conflicts, projects were undertaken to restore social cohesion and help former combatants reintegrate themselves into civilian society and to offer opportunities for intercultural dialogue to local communities.

50. Countries in conflict or post-conflict situations noted that there was a transdisciplinary and holistic approach at the governmental level to restore peace in those countries, thus responding to the requirements embedded in the concept of a culture of peace.

3. Progress

51. In regard to progress achieved towards creating a culture of peace, respondents reported that progress had been made in increasing children's access to schools, owing to the improved awareness of parents, particularly of mothers, of the need for basic education; an improvement in health-care services and infrastructure provided; greater involvement of governmental institutions in culture of peace activities; and a better participation of citizens in electoral processes. The increase in women's participation in decision-making at the local and national levels was also identified as another indicator of progress achieved.

52. At the global level, respondents identified an increased awareness among civil society of issues related to a culture of peace and of peaceful conflict resolution. They highlighted the fact that the expression and concept of "culture of peace" is now broadly used by all kinds of actors, which means that the concept has been fully embraced and integrated by diverse actors. Equally there seems to be a greater awareness of the crucial role of women in creating a culture of peace.

53. Respondents also mentioned a change in mentalities and behaviour. In countries in post-conflict situations, there was a marked decrease in violence and former combatants were better integrated into civilian society. There also appeared to be a decrease in street children's involvement in violent conflict and a decrease in their use of drugs when they were made beneficiaries of NGO projects promoting a culture of peace. It was also noted that young people had become more aware of environmental and social issues and that behavioural changes were observed among teachers and students who benefited from peace education and conflict resolution programmes.

54. In some countries new mechanisms for human rights protection were introduced. Where coordination mechanisms exist, respondents emphasized that the activities carried out for the Decade allowed organizations with different backgrounds to work together and helped to create or reinforce networks and partnerships, including among non-governmental actors and local authorities. Those synergies enhanced the development of new educational tools and methodologies. An increased overall awareness has helped the development of political will in favour of peace and has led to the global recognition that civil society organizations, working in cooperation with Governments, can be the agents for major change.

4. Obstacles and needs

55. Respondents identified the need for the development of national and regional plans of action, the creation of national and international coordination mechanisms, better monitoring of the activities carried out by various actors (governmental

institutions, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and United Nations agencies) and better information-sharing and communication on issues pertaining to the Decade at all levels.

56. Other obstacles cited included a lack of interest and political support from national and international authorities and the mass media; lack of human, financial and material resources; poverty; the gap between men and women with regard to access to education; HIV/AIDS; unemployment; illiteracy; traditional and religious beliefs; and the lack of political will.

57. With regard to the culture of peace approach, the complexity of coherently articulating all related aspects was seen to make it more difficult for governmental and local leaders to understand it and monitor its progress.

58. Better training in conflict resolution and the development of appropriate methodologies of intervention on issues related to a culture of peace and human rights and better communication and information mechanisms at the national level were also seen as areas requiring improvement. Comments were made about the need to expand sustainable peace education activities and to more fully involve the mass media in the promotion of a culture of peace. Some respondents cited the need to focus more on such areas as issues concerning child labour, girls' education and the question of modern slavery.

59. In addition, several respondents stressed that political instability and the complexity of violence were major obstacles. In West Africa, fragile peace resulted in people migrating from countries in conflict situations to more peaceful but already populated areas, which in turn further increased the instability in other, previously unaffected areas of the region. In the Arab region, respondents identified the long-term instability in the Middle East, a lack of respect for human rights and the difficulty to advance reforms in the region as major obstacles.

C. International non-governmental organizations

60. Thirty-six international non-governmental organizations answered the questionnaire. Taking into account the diversity and number of activities implemented by international non-governmental organizations, it is not possible to provide a detailed account in the present summary report.

61. A fundamental aspect of the work of international non-governmental organizations resides in their networking capacity because they are usually represented in a number of countries, which allows them to reach a large and diverse number of people. Contributions received reflected their efforts to raise the awareness of the general public and to sensitize people about the various aspects of a culture of peace.

62. Importance was given to education as a tool for the diffusion of values and principles that pertain to a culture of peace. In regard to education, work is carried out through both formal and non-formal education. It is focused on values and citizenship education, cultural diversity (for example through linguistic education) and the creation of democratic educational environments. In formal education, it is integrated into all stages of the education system, from pre-school to higher education. At the university level, various studies and research programmes were set up on subjects that relate to a culture of peace. In regard to non-formal education,

several organizations developed training programmes on non-violent conflict resolution for young people.

63. To promote the contribution of women to conflict resolution and the promotion of peace, organizations participated in advocacy efforts to promote the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, and the development of related programmes.

64. Respect for cultural diversity and mutual comprehension was promoted through intercultural and inter-religious dialogue activities, the establishment of intercultural programmes aimed at fostering exchanges, and by activities to promote the cultural contributions of indigenous people to society.

65. To help create lasting peace, organizations developed income-generation programmes for vulnerable populations (women, underprivileged or marginalized young people and rural populations), and undertook advocacy with respect to human rights (including women and children's rights).

1. Progress

66. Many respondents reported that there was heightened awareness among the general public on issues related to a culture of peace and specifically on issues such as equality between men and women, the environment and human rights (including economic and social rights) and the prevention of violence. The integrated approach advocated in the United Nations plan of action was seen as being particularly effective in responding to post-conflict situations. Other aspects which were highlighted include the emphasis that national education systems place on conflict resolution, the prevention of violence and the development of new educational methodologies and approaches.

2. Obstacles and needs

67. At the global level, the current international situation was identified as a major obstacle to the achievement of a culture of peace. Since 2001, security issues have replaced peacebuilding issues as the top priority on the international political agenda. Furthermore, many respondents cited poverty and social exclusion as major obstacles to establishment of lasting peace.

68. The lack of human and financial resources, political will, international and governmental support (including from the United Nations system) and interest from the media were seen as major obstacles to achieving peace.

69. International non-governmental organizations highlighted the need for better training of peace actors at the national and international levels, greater involvement of the media in the promotion of a culture of peace, better coordination among non-governmental organizations and the development of communication tools to promote the ideas and principles of a culture of peace, especially among young people.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

70. **In order to maintain visibility and momentum between the midpoint and the completion of the Decade, a global framework should be promoted to**

integrate the various objectives of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which should:

- Develop coordination mechanisms at the international, regional and national levels to strengthen cooperation between all relevant actors: the United Nations system, Member States, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations
- Launch events at the national, regional or international levels to demonstrate the objectives of the Decade
- Mobilize human and material resources at all levels for activities that promote the various aspects of a culture of peace
- Reinforce more explicitly the links with other international decades or years, such as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2010) and the Millennium Development Goals
- Develop communication and information tools that enable participants to perpetuate the global momentum initiated at the beginning of the Decade and during the International Year of a Culture of Peace, using information and communication technologies as tools for communication and advocacy
- Encourage the mass media at the international and national levels to support the global campaign for a culture of peace.

Annex

Summary of a report prepared by the Fundación Cultura de Paz on contributions by civil society organizations on the midpoint of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World

The summary in the present annex has been prepared by the United Nations Secretariat and highlights several recommendations made in civil society reports on contributions by civil society organizations, as reflected by the Fundación Cultura de Paz.

The report of the Fundación Cultura de Paz on contributions by civil society organizations is compiled from the reports of almost 700 civil society organizations from over 100 countries responding to a questionnaire developed by the Fundación Cultura de Paz in response to the invitation in paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution A/59/143, International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010.

Organizations were asked if they have seen progress towards a culture of peace and non-violence during the first half of the Decade and what were the chief obstacles to progress. They were also invited to provide advice to the Secretary-General and the General Assembly to promote a culture of peace and non-violence during the second half of the Decade.

All of the data provided by participating organizations, over 3000 pages and 500 photographs, is available on the Internet at http://decade-culture-of-peace.org. The following recommendations are based on the civil society contributions (pages 17-20):

General recommendations

- The International Day of Peace is the annual highlight for the measurement of progress towards building a culture of peace for all nations and peoples. In support of that objective, one suggestion is to reconvene the United Nations International Day of Peace Steering Group, which was formed at the request of the Secretary-General. Furthermore, the International Day of Peace could be extended towards a week-long promotion of a culture of peace entitled "Living a Culture of Peace Week". The designation of such a week by the General Assembly would help facilitate the promotion of a culture of peace in addition to the International Day of Peace.
- The year 2010 should be declared the "International Year of Reconciliation".

Education

- Strengthen collaboration with NGOs specializing in peace education and appeal to ministries of education for the integration of peace education into national curricula and as a requirement of teacher training (pre-service, in-service and continuing professional development). United Nations agencies that include education as part of their mandate, for instance UNESCO,

UNICEF and UNDP, should broaden their programmes to require peace education content and methodology.

- Promote education for peace in all levels of education, especially cultural exchanges and youth voluntary work.

Human rights

- Reinforce human rights follow-up and monitoring mechanisms in Member States.

Sustainable development

- The attainment of a culture of peace can only be realized side-by-side with meaningful poverty alleviation at grass-roots community levels. That would eliminate the causes that generate violence, such as ignorance and poverty.

Democratic participation

- The promotion of a culture of peace during the next five years should be linked to community development and real democracy in all the countries of Africa. It is well known that true democracy gives birth to the rule of law, which means that people must find it to be on their side, and that there will be no more disorders, no more wars.

Equality of women

- Additional assistance should be given to women's organizations and associations so that they can be provided with effective and modern means of communication. Non-governmental organizations or other regional or national organizations suffer greatly from that lack of communication. Thus it is essential that modern means of communication are accessible to all the organizations which fight to support the living conditions of women and the African people.

Understanding, tolerance and solidarity

- Motivate all faith communities and cultures to engage in interfaith and intrafaith dialogue. Specifically, UNESCO should sponsor a world commission on interfaith dialogue to build and educate for a culture of peace and implement curriculum and teacher education projects for integrating interfaith dialogue and the contributions of faith and spiritual traditions in a non-violent and sustainable solution to conflict and violence.

Free flow of information and knowledge

- Invite national and regional organizations to exchange experiences on cultures of peace and to empower local groups to promote peace. For such encounters methodologies appropriate to the countries of the South would have to be developed.
- Develop openly a campaign for the culture of peace together with the media and through television, magazines, and with the film industry, taking into consideration that they have been strong propagators of the culture of violence.

International peace and security

- Work harder on reducing arms and ammunition manufacturing.
- Bring the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty into the twenty-first century so that it addresses the realities of the threats we currently face. The prevention of weapons development in non-nuclear-weapon States must be clearly tied to the systematic elimination of nuclear weapons in States that already have them.
- Creation of a United Nations agency for mediation, with several thousand professionals, similar to other international organizations, capable of detecting emerging conflicts and helping to transform them peacefully before they lead to war.